

SLIDE

28 GUATEMALA a) General patterns of culture

Guatemala, meaning Land of Trees, is the northernmost and most populous country of Central America and for three centuries of the colonial period was the seat of Spanish power in middle America. It was also the center of the first period of pre-Columbian Mayan civilization which reached its peak between the fourth and seventh centuries, A.D. Today, hidden in the jungles of northern Guatemala are unexplored ruined cities of this civilization, and near Quirigua remarkable stelae (calendar stones erected at regular intervals) and pyramid temples have been excavated and restored. The descendants of these Maya Indians and others who came later comprise the larger part of the present-day Guatemalan population. According to the 1940 census, 55 percent of the population is pure Indian -- the rest are white or of mixed blood. Many of the Indians have retained that purity of race, language, customs and costume which are important factors in understanding the contemporary pattern of culture in this country.

Guatemala, about the size of Louisiana, borders on both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, with Mexico to the northwest, Honduras and El Salvador to the southeast, and British Honduras to the northeast. It is a country of spectacular contrasts in climate, topography, and vegetation, and may roughly be divided into two geographical areas -- the tropical lowlands on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and the more temperate highlands of the Sierra Madres (many of them volcanic mountains) which cross the republic from northwest to southeast. The mountains, valleys and plateaus comprise approximately two-thirds of Guatemala and the tropical lowlands form the balance.

Guatemala is primarily an agricultural country whose chief crops are coffee, bananas, sugar cane, corn, beans, and chicle.

The first Spanish city in Guatemala was founded by Pedro de Alvarado, a lieutenant of Cortez, at Almolongo, in 1527. At his death in 1541 his widow Beatriz was appointed governor. Almost immediately

however, the city was destroyed by an earthquake and flood. A second capital (now known as Antigua) was erected but that, too, was destroyed by flood and earthquake. In 1773 the capital was transferred to the present site, Guatemala City. In 1821 Guatemala revolted against Spanish rule and accepted the invitation of Iturbide to become a part of Mexico. In 1823, after the fall of Iturbide, an assembly called in Guatemala proclaimed the independence of the United Provinces of Central America, with the capital of Guatemala. In 1838 the five members declared themselves independent republics.

The national hero of Guatemala is Justo Rufino Barrios (1835-85) who was responsible for the beginnings of economic stability and progress in that country. The Quetzal bird, native to Guatemala and believed to die in captivity, was chosen as the symbol of her freedom and is used on the flag. The quetzal is also the unit of currency (equal to \$1.00 U.S. currency) for Guatemala.

- 28A The men of Chichicastenango wear a costume consisting of a black jacket and short trousers with a wing-like side flap which is usually elaborately decorated with braid and embroidery. The headdresses are woven by the women and are rich red and purple in color. The market bag worn over the shoulder is an indispensable part of the outfit. This group of Indians is representative of the men of the village.
- 28B Another section of the market showing the large pottery jars which are made in this region. Also note the manner in which the cord wood is being carried on the back of the men at the right of the picture.
- 28C It is customary in most Indian markets to separate products, therefore, one finds the livestock in one section of the market and other products according to kind in other sections. Note in this photograph the manner in which this pig is staked to the ground. Also, notice the manner in which the child is

strapped to the mother's back, the position of the women resting on her ankles and toes in the background, and the costumes of the little girls near their mother.

- 28D The women weave their very fine textiles on primitive portable looms and usually attach one end to the side of a wall or tree, and fasten the other around their waist as is shown in this picture. The child behind the woman is dancing the "dance of the tigers" to the music of a native marimba made of gourds.
- 28E On special fiesta days the village authorities identified by their attire, especially the hat, make the rounds of the village and take up collections for fireworks, etc., which are an integral part of fiesta celebration. They are preceded by two musicians, one playing the drum and another a reed instrument something like the flute. Notice that the man in the background is carrying an image of the Virgin surrounded by a wreath of artificial flowers.
- 28F Natural warm streams are frequent in Guatemala and here along the road we find a group of women washing clothes and bathing in such a stream. Note that the little girl is already imitating her mother and attempting to wash clothes as her mother does.
- 28G A close-up of a typical group of Indian women at the market place in San Francisco en Alto. This village is very high up in the mountains. Notice the many scarfs that the women wear to keep warm.
- 28H In contrast is the temperate, pleasant climate of Atitlan, with its many flowers and brilliant birds. These two women in a cultivated garden wear the red and white blouses identified with the town of Atitlan. Notice the interesting manner in which their hair is coiled with colored yarns around their heads and the elaborate necklaces which they wear.

28I Atitlan on the shores of Lake Atitlan is one of the most beautiful villages in Guatemala. Here the parakeet is native and is frequently seen. Note the volcano in the distance and the costume of the man which is from Solala -- a village nearby.

28J Lake Atitlan with the view of a volcano rising out of the lake.